

Cob.

Press

TOMO CAMPBELL

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HOUSE & GARDEN

01/05/2021

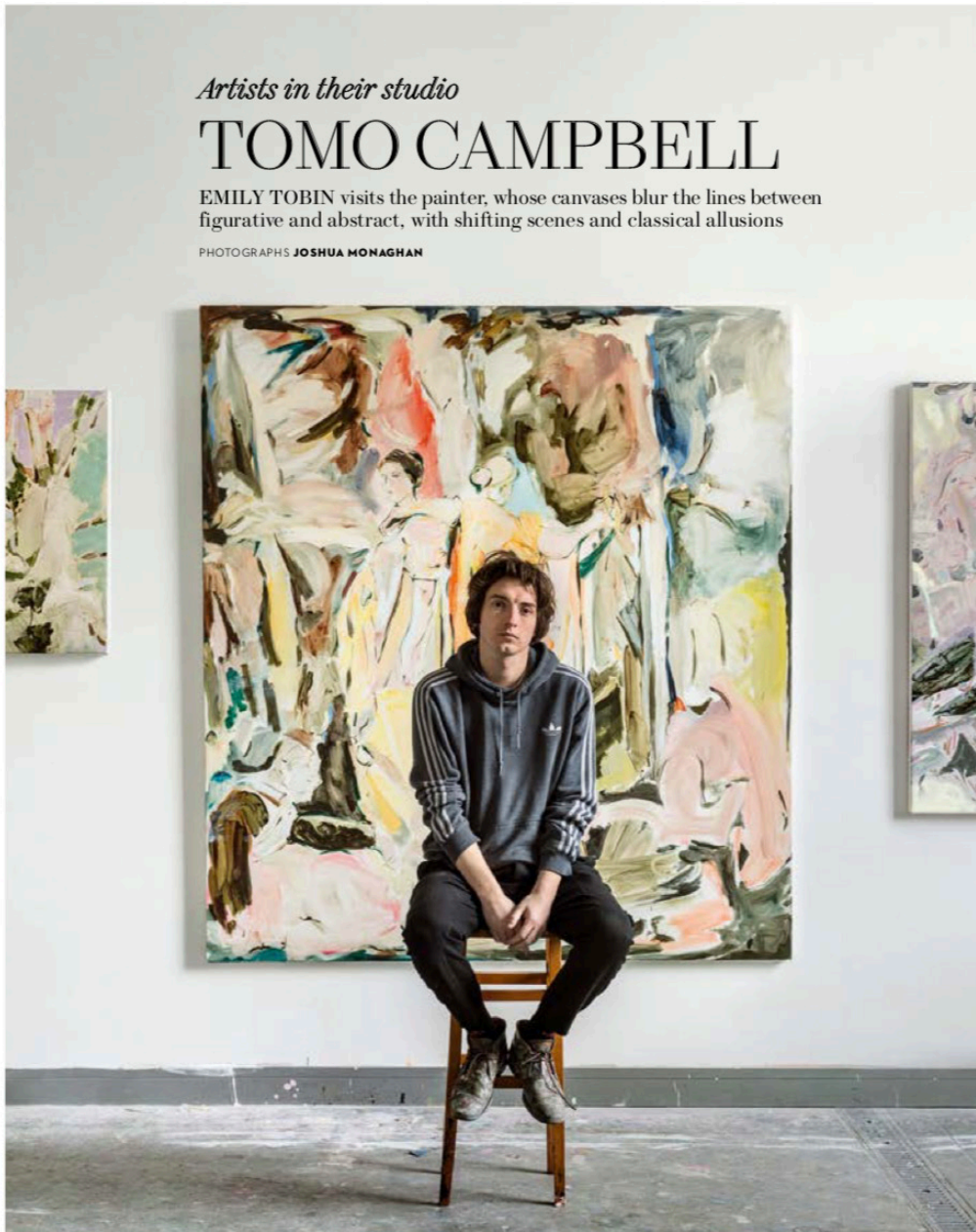
PEOPLE *artist*

Artists in their studio

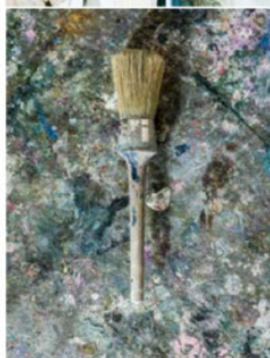
TOMO CAMPBELL

EMILY TOBIN visits the painter, whose canvases blur the lines between figurative and abstract, with shifting scenes and classical allusions

PHOTOGRAPHS JOSHUA MONAGHAN



HOUSEANDGARDEN.CO.UK MAY 2021 000



Painting is a grounding process,' says Tomo Campbell. 'It requires balance.' The artist works from an industrial space in Leyton, far enough off the beaten track to allow for focus. His large and sprawling canvases are neither one thing nor the other. Not quite figurative, not quite abstract. Stay with his work long enough and you will catch glimpses of Greek gods with aquiline noses and bountiful curls. There are hunting parties, hounds and unicorns – all denoted in rich colours and bold layers, which pulse with kinetic energy. His densely packed compositions seem to shift and scatter under your gaze. As Tomo puts it, 'They are never quite solid or whole.' He repeats motifs again and again, often drawing on Flemish tapestries and Victorian paintings: 'I like to exhaust and repeat things, re-editing and cracking into my own process.' Tomo often paints surrounded by his own work, elements of which make their way back into his current project. It is a constant cycle, summed up by his comparison to music: 'If my work was an album, it would be made up of the same song played 10 different ways.'

His titles are pleasingly poetic and wry, too: *Come on Den Nort*, *Julie and the Duke*; or *I'm Still Not Quite Sure What You're Even on About*. They have the staccato rhythm of snippets of conversation or text messages and poke fun at the grandiose titles often bequeathed to artworks. The contrast between the irreverent wording and the oil paintings that they describe makes for a canny combination. It hooks you in and encourages you to spend more time with the work because, of course, as Tomo points out, 'A successful painting is one that you keep looking at' □

Tomo Campbell is represented by Cob Gallery: cobgallery.com



PREVIOUS PAGE Tomo in front of his 2017 oil painting *Never Never*. THIS PAGE He paints surrounded by his previous works; elements of his densely packed compositions often reappear in subsequent paintings. Seen here are details from *Never Never* and (behind Tomo) a work in progress

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EMERGENT MAGAZINE

16/12/2020



émergent magazine

Exhibitions, Interviews, Articles, Store, About

In the studio with Tomo Campbell. Words by Ieva Jasinskaite

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EMERGENT MAGAZINE

16/12/2020

Your latest exhibition 'Go On Then' was recently on display at Cob Gallery. How do you feel your work has changed since the previous exhibition 'There' in 2018?

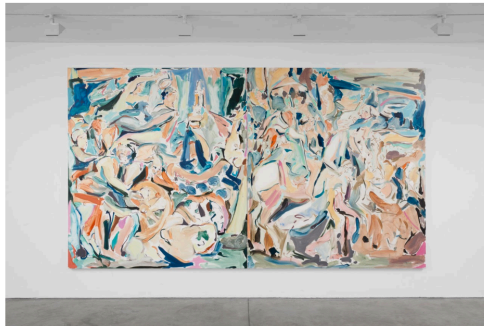
It's been two and a half years I think between the two shows, so I think there have been quite practical changes to how I paint, I now work on coloured grounds instead of blank white, and I use printing techniques in the paintings now. I think it's naturally evolving, but the fundamental ideas in the work have stayed the same.

I am interested to know about your process. Do you mind talking about how it all comes together?

Ah not at all. When I have a show coming up, I tend to work on multiple paintings at once, to build them up together so that hopefully there's a clear link running through the work. It's important to me that the works feel like they're ongoing, or overlapping with each other. In the show, I took that a little further by actually painting paintings that are in the show back onto other paintings in the show. The whole thing began to envelop itself.

What is your studio routine like? Do you have any rituals, are you painting every day?

My routine is very consistent, I arrive at 10 and leave by 6 every day, I eat the same thing from the same cafe every day, but I suppose that's not really a ritual, it's just a preference. The only thing that really changes each day is my mood.



Installation View, Tomo Campbell: Go On Then at Cob Gallery, London, Courtesy of the artist and Cob Gallery

How is the pandemic affecting how you work? Have you had moments when you found it difficult to progress, if so, how did you overcome them?

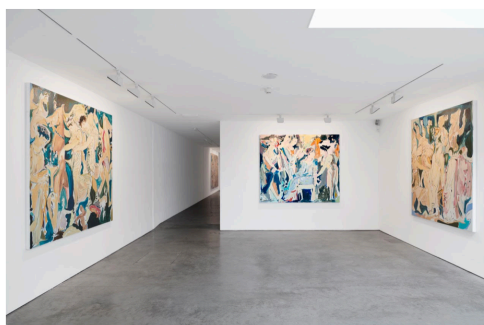
To tell you the truth, it hasn't affected me like it has done to so many others, not physically by catching it or mentally by being in isolation. I'm still in my studio, as it's just me by myself, and I suppose my work is not really influenced by outside forces. At the very start of the first lockdown I found it difficult to paint, it seemed a bit inappropriate to not adjust or recognise what's happening in some way. So I stayed in and made drawings for a month.

You said elsewhere that you never have a preconceived idea of a painting, it happens in a moment. Since your work is so intuitive, are you ever surprised by the finished piece?

I kind of regret saying that. I do have an idea, but that idea always changes whilst I'm making the painting. I don't start from nothing, I shift from one thing into another.

Your palette is distinctive and consistent throughout your practice, can you talk a little bit about the importance of colour in your work?

I don't really think about it, I suppose now you've asked it that I would say that I choose colours and colour combinations that aren't seen together in real life very often, I stay away from 'realistic' colour palettes. Maybe I like the idea of them being lifted out of that world, for the paintings to operate in their own space if that makes any sense. I think the colours I choose are there possibly to make the paintings freer.



Installation View, Tomo Campbell: Go On Then at Cob Gallery, London, Courtesy of the artist and Cob Gallery



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EMERGENT MAGAZINE

16/12/2020

I find the titles of your works and exhibitions interesting -- they almost sound like utterances heard in ordinary life: 'Wait What', 'If All Goes Well', 'Here We Go Again', 'I'm Still Not Quite Sure What You're Even On About', 'If You Know How To Get Here, Come', etc. How do these titles come about?

They're a mix of colloquial type sayings, things that have a nice meter of rhythm to them. Titling used to annoy me, people often make them too grandiose or ignore them altogether, so I like to operate in between that. A title of mine could read as nonsense small talk or because it's a title for a painting, feel like it carries a little meaning with it.

Where do you turn to when searching for ideas? Although abstracted, there seem to be scenes depicted in your work; you talk about painting 'traditional' subjects such as hunting and parades. What is it about this subject matter that interests you and where do you find the source material?

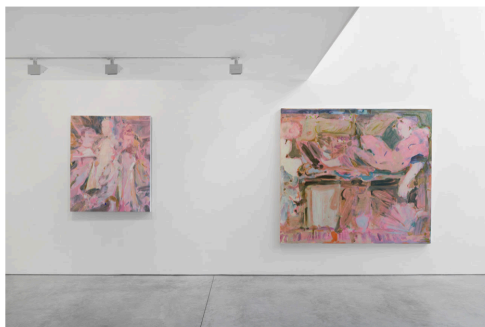
I think scenes of people help with the idea of things overlapping and enveloping each other; I don't want the works to be wholly abstract. I make collages mainly, from all sorts of materials, from photographs I've taken recently back to cave-like paintings. I think with painting people are always aware of history and time, so it's quite nice to be able to make the work shift between different reference points to help with the overall sense of things being fluid and ongoing.

At what point in your creative process do you think about the viewer? What would you like the people who look at your work to experience, if anything?

In an exhibition, I'm more aware of it, more aware of how a viewer might walk through a gallery and what works they see in what order and how that might affect things. But not really in individual paintings.



Photos by Alex Zono



Installation View, Tomo Campbell: Go On Then at Cob Gallery, London, Courtesy of the artist and Cob Gallery

When preparing for a show, do you aim to create a theme, with the paintings working together to create a certain narrative, or do the pieces act as standalone works?

Both, someone once described it as different stanzas of the same poem. Which, whilst being quite a wanky thing to say, does actually make a lot of sense in relation to your question.

You mentioned you are potentially planning to take an extended amount of time in the coming year to fully evolve your practice. How do you see your practice progressing? Are there any new processes or materials you are planning to explore?

I'm not entirely sure yet, I often get an idea and make a leap forward in how I go about making a painting, and then I don't feel comfortable with the change being so drastic. It's a little two steps forward, two steps back, a couple sideways etc.

You have two upcoming shows, one in Miami and one in Taipei. How does it feel to be reaching such a wide global audience?

It'll depend on whether they like them.

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CREDIT
24/10/2020

Credit

Celebrating the Ambiguous: Tomo Campbell's Go on Then at Cob Gallery



📅 Saturday 24th October,
2020

By Jamie Johnson

Cob.

CREDIT

24/10/2020

Tomo Campbell's (b.1988) second solo exhibition at Cob Gallery, is an in-depth pursuit of the artist's fascination in the abstract and the ambiguous, underlined by his emphasis on the process and the joy of painting through difficult times. There is a tacit uncertainty in his work — this should not be interpreted negatively; rather, their casual and unrefined nature lets the audience dictate what it is they want to see. You get the sense that the paintings on show represent a twisted mirror that gazes back at their creator, and subsequently through to the viewer. This is most relevant in the manner in which 'Here We Go Again' and 'There's Always Another', the two centerpieces are positioned relative to the viewer, reflecting one another through abstraction. Hung on opposite sides of the room, they surround the viewer. Ligatures lost in the comfort of a bubblegum bath, the accompanying earthy tones exaggerating jagged movements and provocations.

The manner in which he utilises the power of composition, and the potentially fluid nature of it, manifests itself here as something intangible, yet extraordinarily rich. Campbell's subject matters are archetypes of tradition; silhouettes of a stately figure are witnessed in 'Julie and the Duke', just as a bust of a woman reclined is present in 'Wait What', the uncertainty and anxiety of the current moment etched both in her posture and in the work's title. It is left to the viewer to interpret their own iterations of Campbell's true intentions, but the beauty of undertaking this task is that its results are purely speculative. The complimentary colour palettes Campbell decides to utilise throughout *Go on Then* transports the viewer away from the gallery space, towards somewhere much more dreamlike, somewhere that exists only in the mind's eye. This energy transcends the physical and takes one towards a state lost between activity and stasis, reality and lucidity. It is pieces together after being deconstructed, much like the collages of repeated delineations making themselves familiar to us through their sheer volume.

The works are technically accomplished. The innovative use of UV printing in combination with oil painting and other varied forms of manual craftsmanship creates subtle recurrences and reinterpretations of ligatures, movements and figures, old intersecting new. The prints, visible through slits in the application of paint, are of Campbell's archival prints, speaking of repetition and a willingness to revisit, and relearn from, the past, alongside an eagerness to do, to make. The title *Go on Then*, whilst provocative, is also without inhibition, implying an energy to make and a recognition that these works are uniquely his, demonstrating both a verbal and an artistic lexicon that are irreplaceable. Campbell was the English National Ballet's first artist in residence between 2012-2013 and there is evidence of silhouettes elegantly pirouetting through the trails of the thick oil brushstrokes which bubble and bounce atop the surface of the canvas. It is a joyous yet unrefined celebration of the ambiguous, in both principle and in execution.

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PORT
14/10/2020



ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

Mon Ami

Alexandre Mattiussi and Tomo Campbell on their latest shows



"For the days are long
From the first milk van
To the last shout in the night,
An eternity. But the weeks go by
Like birds; and the years, the years
Fly past anti-clockwise
Like clock hands in a bar-mirror."

– Derek Mahon

For many months, days have bled into one another and there has been little to tell them apart. Time has both stood still and sped by, routines and ruts snuffing creative sparks. But, for creative director and founder of AMI, Alexandre Mattiussi, and painter Tomo Campbell, this year has been as productive as any other. Recently working together, they have presented and are presenting their latest collections in Paris and London respectively. Mattiussi, who founded the award-winning Parisian fashion brand in 2011, showcased his cool, carefree, *laissez faire* SS21 menswear and womenswear collection – titled 'Suddenly Next Summer' – during Paris Fashion Week, while Campbell is currently presenting 'Go On Then', a suite of new mixed media works on canvas as his second solo exhibition at Cob Gallery, during London's Frieze week.

Since graduating from Central Saint Martins, Campbell has exhibited internationally and was awarded the first artist in residence place at the English National Ballet. His abstract, large-scale oil takes on traditional subjects are best described in the British artists own words: "they are never quite solid or whole. I try to paint in a way that makes the paint vibrate, to make it look light and delicate and on the cusp of shifting. The more you look, the more you get, and I like making people really have to look."

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PORT
14/10/2020



In addition to both presentations, the two have worked together on a commissioned artwork for in store that will be displayed within AMI's Duke Street boutique. Their creative processes have also been captured in a short film by Frieze Creative Publishing and Rose Forde titled '[The Day, Before](#)', premiered and released [online](#) today. Following the pair over a single day, viewers can step into their shoes from morning to dusk, keenly feeling their routine and rhythms, as well as their hopes and anxieties about sharing their work at this time.

Port caught up with Mattiussi and Campbell to discuss their shows, inspirations and the need for optimism in our current climate.

How has your life and creativity been affected by the pandemic?

TC: I think there's two ways in which it's affected my life really. On a macro scale, nothing's the same, you can't interact with friends and family the same and the usual way of living has completely been disrupted. But on a micro scale it's also had its upsides, like a reset button. I've spent more time with my family, more time on my own in my studio. It's helped me in that regards to reconsider what's important.

AM: Few of us have been prepared to live like this. We've been surprised by the intensity of the period and it has crushed many of our habits. I'm ok with that. What happens often needs to happen and the times in our lives when we feel vulnerable are important. In a professional capacity I had to look after my team and we didn't know what to expect from lockdown, but we still had to work on our collection. It has been as surprising as it has disturbing. I experienced everything by myself as my team were working from home. Alone in the studio, I tried to figure out how to be as creative as possible. It took time for ideas to flow, but it was very peaceful and serene sketching by myself. It felt like when I started AMI 9 years ago, I was forced – in a good way – to bring back my original energy and go back to basics. We've very lucky to make and present this collection – it's a miracle really!

Could you talk a little about your shows, what you wanted to express, what was new?

AM: I tried to find a balance between what AMI is and what AMI could be, building on our strong foundations of what is pure, clean, necessary. Going straight to the point of what a wardrobe is. I loved this collection because it feels romantic, simple (which is difficult to do), fresh and useful. It's sophisticated but not pretentious. I'm writing a book and every season is a new chapter. Every day there are new protagonists, characters, locations, colours, fabrics. The men and women I designed this for I see everyday in the streets of Paris and this was a chance for me to pay tribute to the city, which is one of my many inspirations. I still feel like there's a magic here, even with lockdown.

TC: I'd say the overall themes of the work are the same, but what's evolving is how I'm going about expressing them. I've always been interested in the idea of things repeating and distorting, but in this show I've taken the repeating one step further by actually repeating sections of paintings onto other paintings using a printing technique. So in the show you hopefully get this feeling of everything being linked but shifting.

What is inspiring you at the moment?

TC: A lot of how I work is about cracking open my own practice, reworking ideas over time. I'm very rarely struck by 'inspiration' but do have little 'breakthroughs' that only really come about by working through things repeatedly.



How did you find working on the artwork for in store? Did you find parallels between your process and practices?

TC: We share a lot of beliefs and have similar approaches to creativity. It's interesting for me to see how different people go about creating what they do. I think Alex is a wonderful designer, we share a similar aesthetic. It has also been great to develop a friendship over these weird times.

AM: I've loved Tomo's work for a long time so it was a lovely surprise to work together, we have a similar energy. In the end, he dedicated a painting to me and in a way, I could say I dedicated my collection to him. Intellectually and intuitively, we shared a lot and I feel like I know him well already, even if it was only over Zoom! Sometimes when an artist collaborates with a fashion designer it always ends with a print on a t shirt and we did not want to do that at all, we wanted something more substantial.

What makes you optimistic about art and fashion?

TC: I honestly don't know how to answer that. I suppose there is a lot of hope in creativity in general, and hope is always going to be a driving force for things, so I think art itself is optimistic and hopeful – or at least the art I look for is.

AM: I believe in a point of view, in people who resist, who think that love is bigger than hate, who are trying to point us in the right direction. We're living in strange times, but I can see hope and joy everywhere, a desire for change. I am as passionate as I've ever been and believe in myself. As a fashion designer, you're making clothes for people to feel comfortable or confident in, to help them express their own identity through a uniform, to explain who they are. We create things that become a part of people's lives and clothes are essential parts of them. They allow us to play the characters we want to play.

Go On Then runs at Cob Gallery until 30th October 2020

Campbell and Mattiussi will be in conversation with Love Magazine editor Harriet Verney, taking place via Zoom, on 15th October

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FRIEZE
13/10/2020

FRIEZE

ami

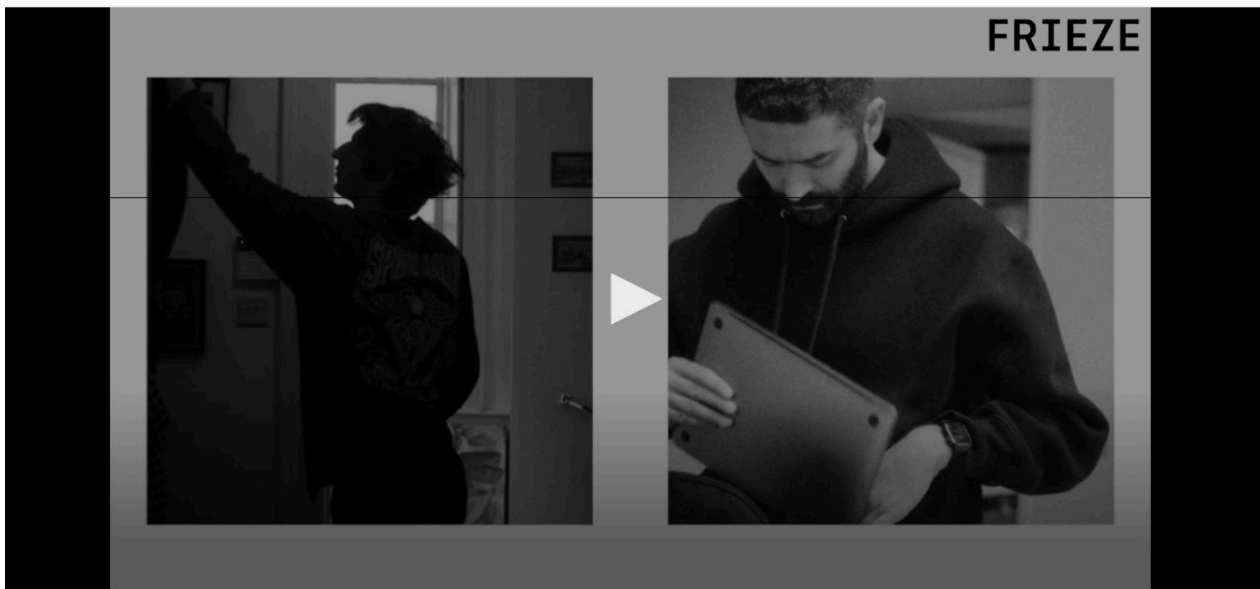
alexandre mattiussi

In
Collaboration
with **AMI**
Alexandre
Mattiussi

Tomo Campbell and Alexandre Mattiussi in 'One Day, Before'

Two cities, two creatives, two shows

IN COLLABORATIONS, VIDEOS | 13 OCT 20



As the world begins to return to live events this autumn, artist Tomo Campbell and AMI's Creative Director and Founder Alexandre Mattiussi prepare their upcoming shows: for Campbell, at London's Cob Gallery and for Mattiussi, at Paris Fashion Week.

One Day, Before accompanies artist and designer over a single day during this period of intense preparation, as they go from townhouse and apartment to studio and showroom to pub and cafe. Touching on the shared interests in spontaneity, colour and continuity that marks their practices, Campbell and Mattiussi give insight into their creative processes and offer a glimpse of their routines. 'I've been working in fashion for the last 20 years', notes Mattiussi, 'so I have my habits while Campbell admits: so much of my day is sitting and just thinking of what colour I can put on next.'

On Thursday 15th October at 6:30pm BST, please join Tomo Campbell and Alexandre Mattiussi for an exclusive conversation about their work and their recent project, moderated by Harriet Verney (Editor, *Love* magazine). Register [here](#).

Tomo Campbell, '[Go on then](#)' is on view at Cob Gallery, London until 30th October 2020.

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FAD MAGAZINE

08/10/2020

FAD magazine

TOMO CAMPBELL, AMI, COB GALLERY AND FRIEZE TO RELEASE FILM CELEBRATING CREATIVE COLLABORATION, AND HOST DIGITAL LIVE EVENT WITH HARRIET VERNEY.

By Mark Westall • 8 October 2020

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Cob Gallery (London) and AMI, the Parisian fashion brand have joined together in celebration of painter Tomo Campbell and the creative director and founder of AMI, Alexandre Mattiussi – as they prepare to showcase their latest collections in London and Paris respectively



Tomo Campbell *To Alex, 2020* Mixed media 130 x 120 cm (CAMPBELL_47) Copyright: © The Artist Courtesy of Cob Gallery, London

Campbell will present *Go On Then*, a suite of new mixed media works on canvas as his second solo exhibition at Cob Gallery during London's Frieze week, and Mattiussi his Spring-Summer 21 menswear and womenswear collection during Paris Fashion Week. Concurrent to both of these presentations, Campbell and Mattiussi will work on a collaborative installation to be displayed within AMI's Duke Street boutique.

To document the evolution of the collaboration Frieze working alongside Rose Forde, will produce a 3-minute film following Campbell and Mattiussi in the lead up to their events, which will premiere on frieze.com on the 14th October, 2020.

Following the pair over a course of a single day, the film allows the viewer to step into each of their worlds, in a diary-like fashion, from morning to dusk. We see the landscape of their work and their lives, focussing on how they inhabit their studios and the way their work is generated. We discuss the evolution of their respective practices, and the influences and inspirations they are focussing on for these upcoming shows, as well as their hopes and anxieties about sharing their work at this time.

Campbell and Mattiussi will further examine the parallels in their creative lives in a digital conversation with Love Magazine editor Harriet Verney. Taking place via Zoom, on 15th October, Verney will delve further into their individual practices and examine how artists and makers find themselves adapting to the current climate.

Film – *A Day In The Life* Released 14th October 2020 A 3 minute Film featuring Tomo Campbell and AMI creative director Alexandre Mattiussi Produced and hosted by Frieze.

Digital In Conversation 15th October 2020 Tomo Campbell and Alexandre Mattiussi in conversation in a live Zoom event Hosted by LOVE Editor Harriet Verney Both events will be on frieze.com

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FINANCIAL TIMES

06/03/2020



FINANCIAL TIMES

myFT

HOME WORLD UK COMPANIES TECH MARKETS CLIMATE OPINION WORK & CAREERS LIFE & ARTS HOW TO SPEND IT

Opinion **House & Home**

How to curate your own art collection

Our columnist's favourite galleries — online and off — that cater to all tastes and budgets

LUKE EDWARD HALL



'There', Tomo Campbell (2018), Cob Gallery

Luke answers readers' questions on design and stylish living every week. Email him at lukeedward.hall@ft.com and follow him on Instagram [@lukeedwardhall](https://www.instagram.com/lukeedwardhall)

I would like to collect original art to hang in my Edwardian-era London townhouse, rather than the framed Rothko prints I have had for years. But I don't know where to start. What do you suggest?

I have been accumulating prints and pictures for our home in the country since last summer and the hunt has been thrilling. Like you, we have had the same pictures bedecking our walls in London for years and we were not planning to transfer any of them.

I knew the kind of things I wanted. As with furniture, I like an intriguing, eclectic mix: contemporary art, drawings, photography, architectural prints and posters. It can be hard to know where to begin with a new collection but luckily, there are plenty of good, approachable galleries catering to all tastes and budgets.

It is so convenient to browse for pictures on the web — if I find something I am interested in, I make the trip to look at it, or I ask for more photographs.

The [Cob Gallery](#) in Camden is another great place to discover emerging talent. Full disclosure: it was founded by my friends Polly Stenham and Victoria Williams, and they occasionally sell prints of my work.

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PAPER
14/10/2018

≡ PAPER®



ART

Meet the Young British Artist Harry Styles Collects

"The thing with painting is that it's really slow. The more you look, the more you get, and I like making people really have to look." Tomo Campbell is standing in front of one of his large-scale oil paintings, *The Hunt*, almost blending into the figurative characters hidden within the layers of fluid, expressive paint. Look closer and men on horseback ride gallantly through clouds of coral and dusty violet, while a unicorn thrusts its spiraling horn through a bold blue mist.

Campbell's vivid compositions draw inspiration from Victorian etchings, Athenian vases and medieval tapestries, which he upscales into evocative abstract paintings. "I like tearing things apart and pulling out colors and shapes, and I never know what people will pick up on. It's like looking at clouds — you find your own interpretation."

Born in the London suburb of Twickenham to a family of footballers, the 30-year-old Campbell has "no idea" where his artistic flair came from. His childhood penchant for drawing led to a place at Central Saint Martins, after his teacher encouraged him to apply. "I always wanted to study painting, but the type of painter I thought I was got torn out of me pretty quickly at CSM."

Campbell got his big break when Mario Testino bought a painting from his degree show in 2010, propelling him into London's creative spotlight. Alexa Chung and Harry Styles are also collectors, the latter of whom he met through his wife Sam, co-founder of Bleach London, the cult salon credited with pioneering the pastel-hued hair craze. The couple lives in Stoke Newington in East London with their two children, two-year-old Sid and newly born Honor. "I wouldn't say fatherhood has affected my work," he muses. "Maybe on a subconscious level, but being in the studio is a really private thing." It has, however, focused Campbell, forgoing "lie-ins and beers" in favor of early mornings and disciplined studio shifts.

Campbell was one of the last to study at the Central Saint Martins Soho campus before it upped sticks to King's Cross in 2011, and he remembers it being "really run down, in an amazing way. Nothing worked and it was shabby, but you felt that you were in the presence of great artists."

His degree show paintings of dancers led to a residency at the English National Ballet, and he has exhibited globally in Melbourne, LA and Dallas. Last year, he curated an exhibition of painters he found on Instagram, shown at the Golborne Gallery in London. "Social media is a strange one," he says. "It is amazing to have access to art across the world and look behind the scenes of how different creatives work. However, it can sometimes discourage people from actually going out and seeing art."

"I would love to have been amongst Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud in London during the fifties, drinking in the day and painting through the night. Crowds would just gravitate towards certain places. Now you don't have that so much, as you can be anywhere at any time."

Campbell is currently "hiding away," creating a fresh body of work ahead of a show in LA next spring. "I don't really have any long-term plan. I can only produce the work, and it's up to galleries and buyers to determine what happens next. If you wait for inspiration, it can make you lazy. You aim to surprise yourself."

Photography: Britt Lloyd

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WALL STREET INTERNATIONAL

12/04/2018



There

11 Apr — 5 May 2018 at the Cob Gallery in London, United Kingdom

12 APRIL 2018



Tomo Campbell, *There*, 2018, oil on canvas, courtesy of Cob Gallery

Following exhibitions in London, Melbourne and Dallas, painter Tomo Campbell makes his first solo appearance at Cob Gallery in April. The work on show walks a characteristic tightrope between pinpoint precision and cool ambiguity: limpid, vivid compositions of interlocking form and colour toy with the grammar of aesthetic representation just as the show's title disrupts the grammar of language. It could be flippant, it could be profound. Deceptive or sincere. The choice is as much yours as it is Campbell's.

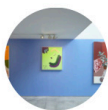
There sees Campbell taking a new direction in his painted work, characterised by an increased interest in motion and activity. An eclectic array of source material supplies motifs in form and colour that resonate within and between the various works on show. Anachronistically combining features drawn from antique vases and medieval tapestries, Renaissance and Victorian painting, the artist uses anachronism and asynchronicity to disorient and seduce, provoking a sensation of weightlessness in time.

The effect of the work exhibited in *There* lends itself to analogy with sound: certain forms and colour patterns loop, echo and reverberate between different works in a way that makes the whole show into one huge composition. Collectively and individually, these paintings have rhythm: Campbell's thin layers of pigment seem to vibrate with energy, resolving into complex chords and time signatures before dissolving back into a kind of pleasurable noise.

The keynote of *There* is set by the gallery's back room, where Campbell hangs two large-scale paintings opposite one another. The works are almost mirror images. Almost, but not quite: the effect of near-identity that is produced develops precisely slippage that is so central to the artist's interest in motion and activity. The eye of the spectator is kept moving between and across the painted surfaces, revelling in the lightness of disembodiment, even as their body itself is arrested into still contemplation.

Opening an exciting chapter in Campbell's career, *There* sets disorientation, motion, pleasure and wit into play as forces that compete and converse, becoming the substance of an exhibition that quivers with individuality.

Tomo Campbell (b. 1987 Twickenham, UK) lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include Melbourne Austarlia (2017); Dallas Art Fair, Texas, USA (2017); Blacks Club, London (2016); Palm Tree Gallery, London (2015); Rushgrove House, London (2012); Motion Gallery, London (2010). He was artist in residence at the English National Ballet between 2012-2013. Campbell's work is collected internationally.



Cob Gallery

Cob Gallery supports new and emerging London-based talent in the visual arts. Incorporating a substantial exhibition space and adjoining artists' studios, it fosters a culture of close collaboration and mutual support between makers and curators, offering an inclusive and nourishing platform for artists to develop their practice.

Location
London, United Kingdom

Founded in
2011

Cob.

ANOTHER

02/04/2018

AnOther

Brilliant Things To Do in April

DESIGN & LIVING / ANOTHER TO DO LIST

Longer days! Warmer temperatures! Take full advantage with our curated list of cultural activities

APRIL 02, 2018

TEXT Belle Hutton TEXT Daisy Woodward



Tomo Campbell, *You and Who Else* Courtesy of Cob Gallery

Tomo Campbell: *There* at Cob Gallery, London: April 11 – May 5, 2018

Pooling inspiration from a variety of time periods (medieval, Victorian) and pieces (antique vases, tapestries), artist Tomo Campbell's captivating paintings are nothing short of eclectic. Cob Gallery's exhibition of Campbell's work promises a disorienting yet pleasing look at the painter's practice and style. In the gallery's back room, two almost-identical paintings will hang opposite each other, their nearly-but-not-quite mirror image surfaces set to intrigue and puzzle the viewer.

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MR PORTER

07/11/2017

MR PORTER

Fashion

4 MINUTE READ

Mr P. My Way: Mr Tomo Campbell

Photography by Mr David Urbanke | Styling by Mr Olie Arnold

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The artist paints a picture of how his style develops alongside his work.

Mr Tomo Campbell talks like he paints. Words tumble out at the speed of thought. Half-finished sentences melt into one another. His hands move constantly, as if trying to lend shape to ideas too abstract for words alone. It makes for an amusingly off-beat conversation; you never quite know what he's going to say next, and suspect that neither does he. When translated to canvas, though, that same nervous energy makes for strikingly beautiful art.

"I never have a preconceived idea of what I'm going to do," says Mr Campbell in his east London studio. "The possibility of a painting can only happen in the moment. Ideas change depending on my mood, on the time of day, on what else is in the room." That's not to suggest, however, that his paintings are entirely spontaneous. Look beyond the feverish brushstrokes and evidence of a formal artistic education begins to emerge. Littering the walls and floor of his studio are black-and-white scans of 15th-century tapestries, sketches by Flemish master Mr Peter Paul Rubens and paintings by little-known Victorian artist Mr Albert Joseph Moore. These classical influences are designed to reveal themselves over time, almost like a Magic Eye, Mr Campbell says: "The more you look, the more you can see."

The charismatic Mr Campbell got an early break. A graduate of Central Saint Martins, he was thrust into the limelight when photographer Mr Mario Testino bought a piece from his degree show. Now 29 years old and married with a son, he has managed to establish himself as one of London's most sought-after fine artists. With unruly hair, aquiline features and a penchant for corduroy suits – he even got married in one – he fits the bohemian ideal. But clearly there is even more to the artist than meets the eye. MR PORTER met him preparing for his new show in Melbourne, Australia.



It's notoriously difficult to make a living as an artist. Did it ever worry you?

Never in those terms. I always figured that this was what I was going to do, and I've been lucky enough that it seems to be working out. I'd never tell anyone to become a painter if they wanted to be make a lot of money, because you can't predict your fortunes. That's not the reason you do it.

How do you paint?

It's quite instinctive. I like to let my work cross-pollinate. I might use one brush and go round several paintings at a time. I never really know when a painting's finished, either. I like to leave that uncertain.

Do you have a set routine?

I'm in the studio from late morning until early evening, but during that time I could be doing anything. Sometimes I might get in the zone and work frantically for a three-week period, and then sometimes I might not paint at all. I might spend all day looking at a painting and trying to reassess it, or just doing admin – cleaning my brushes, that sort of thing. I don't see that as any less important than time spent painting, though.

Have you taken any style cues from the art world?

When I first got into painting, I'd watch videos of Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud in Soho in the 1960s and 1970s. They'd have paint on their shoes and their trousers, but they'd wear a cravat or an overcoat. And it would kind of smarten them up. It was scruffy yet smart at the same time. I quite like that if it's done honestly. If it's not, it feels like an affectation.

So that's not the sort of thing you'd copy?

I'd never go out with paint on my shoes, because I'd be terrified that people would think I'd done it on purpose. No – whenever I get paint on my clothes they become my "painting clothes" and they don't leave the studio.

Has becoming a father changed the way you dress?

Well, Sid has no direct influence on what I wear. But I suppose becoming a dad has made me try to dress a bit more grown-up. Maybe that's why I've started wearing a lot more trousers? I've always imagined dads in trousers.

What do you look for in clothes?

I tend to think of myself as quite a messy person. My mum always used to say that I looked like a crumpled heap. I've got lots of nervous energy, and you can see that in the paintings, in the way I move, in the way I talk. The way I dress helps to counterbalance that a little bit. I don't want the clothes I wear to define me. I just want them to make me look presentable, that's all.

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Painting from series "Held On The Tips Of Fingers" By Tomo Campbell

Painter Tomo Campbell on finding beauty in imperfection

The London-born painter discusses an intersection of influences, including ballet, jazz, football, and making mistakes

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A Central Saint Martins graduate, former artist-in-residence at the English National Ballet, and briefly a model for Dior, Tomo Campbell is undeniably a talented artist who doesn't strive towards perfection in his art but finds joy in its flaws. This month, his debut show *Held On The Tips Of Fingers* will be exhibited at Golborne Gallery.

The 28-year-old painter and photographer was born in Twickenham to a family of footballers, though football was never his calling. "As a kid I was always colouring in, you know, more so than most kids do. But I was never aware of it as an option in life. I used to design football kits when it was too miserable to play football."

On his painting style, Campbell doesn't like to categorise himself as it comes across as "so predetermined", but he explains that during the process, the brush strokes happen quickly, in a fast manner, and almost instinctively. "My process begins with no plan and with no aim. I just kind of work through, constantly swinging between feelings and emotions, seeing how things progress, sometimes feeling confident and sometimes feeling like it's a disaster. And I think that the balancing point between those two things is actually where the work lies. It's why the show is called *Held On The Tips Of Fingers*. Like it's quite grasped but not quite dropped, just on that fragile tipping point."

Campbell takes some time to pinpoint his influences; until it suddenly dawns on him. Like his paintings, his thoughts become "activated and it all kind of fits in place".

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mistakes made the whole thing seem
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On his influences, one particular band has shaped the way he paints. "There's this jazz band called Portico Quartet... they write these incredible pieces of music where it seems at any point it could all fall apart, and it does. It can collapse beyond anything recognisable as a song. I'd go and watch them perform and each time the songs would develop differently. It felt really organic and like the process was where the feeling was. This idea of variations and mistakes and basically just attempting to articulate feelings has become probably a really conscious influence on me."

While Campbell "used to kind of pray for something... like some kind of divine intervention", he no longer feels the need to search for a higher power as his own art informs itself and one painting leads to another. His residency at the ballet, too, has helped him to discover his creative process. Campbell draws upon the mistakes found in this different form of art, and his own way of thinking draws parallels to the flawed movement of ballerinas. "I'd see them make mistakes; the mistakes made the whole thing seem real and added a weight to what, otherwise to an outsider, can seem dull, easy and outdated. And I went away wanting that in my paintings. To not try and impress people with how good the paintings are and how proficient a painter I am, and to actually show how much struggle and real effort these things take. And they don't always work; there's a human process throughout the whole thing. There's a whole host of different feelings in them – from arrogance to cluelessness."

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i-D

INTERVIEW | By [Bunny Kinney](#) | 24 May 2016, 12:40am

tomo campbell is the young london artist who makes paint vibrate

The former football hopeful turned painter has a new solo exhibition of work that looks at subjects in search of something more.



photography carly scott

Tomo Campbell is the 28-year-old Twickenham-born painter and Central Saint Martins graduate whose solo exhibition, *Held on the Tips of Fingers*, opens at the Golborne Gallery in Notting Hill this month.

The artist, whose career was kickstarted after Mario Testino bought his degree show work, has created nine new large-scale paintings for the exhibition. The works feature colourful, abstract scenes of hunting, parades and explorers shape-shifting across each canvas in order to create a sense of something deliberately unfinished, and, as Campbell puts it, "never quite solid or whole."

How did you get your start as an artist - you studied fine art at Central Saint Martins, did you come from an artistic family?

My family has no artistic background at all, actually. My dad was a football coach and all the kids grew up wanting to be footballers, so I always assumed that would be what I'd do. I didn't even know you could actually be an artist until I was about 17 and got into art school.

What drew you to painting in particular?

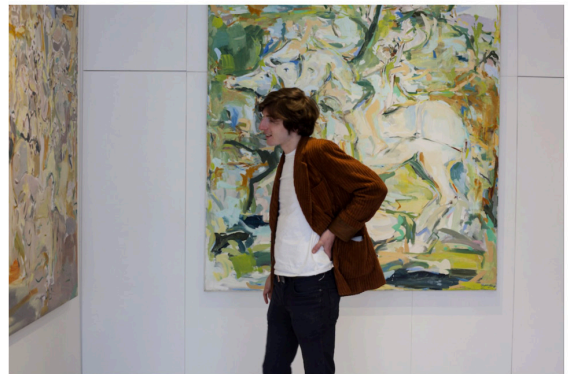
I've always been painting. Everyone did it as a kid - I just never stopped. The more I painted, the more the process would crack itself open and reveal new depths to explore. What gets me about paint is that it's a fluid medium, and I'm interested in this kind of fluidity between one thing and another.

Kind of like kicking a football! So what's the story behind the works in the show?

The paintings are variations of the same thing, displayed all at once. They are a search for something that progress and digress at the same time, like a route that has an infinite amount of detours within it. In this show the subjects are explorers and hunters, searching for something they're not sure of, I guess. I suppose it's a little back and forth between the viewer who is also searching for something.

What is your creative process like - with all these infinite detours and loops, where does an idea begin?

I like the idea of slowing down the viewer, so they can't just look at it once and think they've sussed it out. I want [the images] to slowly reveal themselves or dissolve. So when I'm painting I try and balance things on the edge of being there and not quite being there. I try and paint in a way that makes the paint vibrate, to make it look light and delicate and on the cusp of shifting.



You've mentioned before that your work is meant to appear as if it has no beginning or end. So how do you know when a painting is finished?

That's one of the hardest decisions I suppose. I guess what it comes down to is that I don't have an image in my mind I'm trying to get to, I don't have a set way to start and I definitely don't have a clear point of completion. I kind of abandon them and move on rather than complete them.

Your interest in movement seems particularly relevant to your work as artist-in-residence for the English National Ballet, what was that like?

Dancers from the start were interesting to me. I was watching all the rehearsals and watching how the ballets develop. You'd see these people who can make their bodies move with an ease you can't fathom. But when I'd see a dancer land wrong or lose balance even for a millisecond, I'd notice. It wasn't a case of pointing out a mistake, though. Instead what it did for me was highlight how the other 99% was perfect. If the whole thing was flawless I think one could misconceive the dance as easy or effortless and tame. That really interested me, the idea of mistakes being useful as a way of creating meaning.

Is there a wider creative scene in London that you feel closely connected to?

I have friends who work in fashion, journalism, music, art... There are always people talking about ideas or projects they've got or things they've done, and I'm massively into that and really interested in how different people think. There are lots of conversations about ideas all the time. Everyone is kind of buzzing for everyone else.

Held on the Tips of Fingers runs until June 12 at the Golborne Gallery, 72 Golborne Road, W10 5PS.